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Technical Advisory Group Meeting?

In 2001, DOE organized a group of technical experts to review and evaluate groundwater modeling at the Pantex Plant. The experts represented various interests, and groundwater hydrologist George Rice represented STAND on behalf of the community.

This Technical Advisory Group (TAG) met four times between August 2001 and February 2002, and reviewed 19 groundwater flow and contaminant transport models.

Some of the TAG's major recommendations to the DOE included separate models to be used for each of three areas - the Regional Ogallala Aquifer, the Burning Ground and adjacent off-site areas north of Pantex, and the Southeast Plume of onsite Zones 11 and 12, and offsite. The models for both the Burning Ground and Southeast Plume areas were to be linked to the regional Ogallala Aquifer model.

The TAG also recommended that model information, such as final input files, be made available to the public.

DOE accepted the TAG's recommendations on December 5, 2001, and the TAG was to meet annually to review the progress of the groundwater modeling work at Pantex.

However, the TAG has not met since August 28, 2003.

STAND is concerned that DOE has abandoned its commitment to the TAG, and wonders about the status of its modeling and its adherence to the recommendations it accepted.

NOTE source of DOE's commitment: In the TAG Final report (January 2002) the TAG recommends annual meetings (or more frequent, page 53). Page F-2 contains the DOE/BWXT signatures.

By Pam Alison

Grant Updates

STAND recently completed its third and is beginning its fourth grant from the Citizens' Monitoring and Technical Assessment Fund (MTA Fund). The MTA Fund was established as part of a 1998 court settlement between the U.S. Department of Energy and 39 plaintiffs, made up of nonprofit peace and environmental groups around the country. The fund was to enable citizens' groups to hire technical and scientific assistance to review and analyze environmental activities at DOE sites.

STAND will use part of its grant to evaluate possible off-site contamination near Pantex. Pantex used samples from off-site to determine "background" values for evaluating on-site contamination. However, Pantex failed to evaluate those same samples for contaminants known to have originated at Pantex (i.e., high explosives).

By Pam Alison

THE VISION

*The Panhandle is our home;
the world is our neighbor.
STAND is committed to building a
sustainable future,
conserving the natural resources
entrusted to our care,
and protecting life, community,
and democracy.*

Renewable energy was the theme of the 16th Annual Southern Plains Conference, held this year in Lubbock and now sponsored by Ogallala Commons. Robert Clark and I attended the two-day meeting and learned the latest on alternatives to fossil fuel. The idea is that we residents of the Southern Plains live in the "Saudi Arabia" of wind and solar energy, with the focus on individual, rather than institutional access to the wonders of renewable energy.

Friday was devoted to tours showcasing various real-life examples of alternative energy use in the Lubbock area. Lubbock Christian College, for instance, has converted a large portion of its heating and cooling plant to geo-thermal energy, an application which is readily adapted to one's home.

Saturday's program consisted of lectures and workshops, starting off with an overview of a hundred years of energy generation on the High Plains, presented by Dr. Ken Starcher of the Alternative Energy Institute at West Texas A&M. Dave Regal, manager of EarthSolar in Amarillo, and Dave Stebbins, an Amarillo off-the-grid homeowner, passed on valuable practical information on how individuals can supplement or replace their traditional energy sources with alternatives such as solar and wind power.

Anyone concerned about our slavish dependence on the earth's rapidly disappearing fossil fuels would have drawn inspiration from this conference to make their own personal foray into the world of sustainable energy alternatives.

by Harry Everett

2004 High Plains Groundwater Resources Challenges and Opportunities Conference was held at Lubbock Convention Center Dec. 7-9th, 2004. There were informative presentations of studies of the area and reports by authorities of groundwater issues. Dr. Judy Reeves, Professor at Texas Tech University, Geology Department, began the conference by demonstrating how the Ogallala Aquifer was formed and how many trillion years it took to build the bank of water known as the aquifer. Recharge occurs at 1/4" to 2.5" per year, depending on the location.

C.E. Williams, Panhandle Groundwater District, spoke next on the current rules used to "allow 50% of the aquifer to be pumped in 50 years".

The State of Texas is offering many suggestions towards conserving the water we have, but they are only "recommendations" at this time. Their "recommendations" are not mandatory.

Professionals who are paid to study our water supply to determine availability for our children's future are alarmed. They all agree that good management of our resources is imperative.

The big question is: Who owns the ground water? Texas Legislature is pondering that question. Concerns among many are evident and better management policies seem inevitable. The idea of increasing power amongst individual water districts is most popular, since each district knows its area's needs best.

by Sara Black

Conservation Corner

"We are using our freshwater faster than we are recharging our groundwater.

Earth will not get any more water. Conserve water before there is no water to conserve."

Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA

Ask your city water department how you can do your part in conserving water this summer!

(Tip: Water your lawn in the early morning, before the wind gets up and blows it away.)

In Memoriam

William Klingensmith, M.D.

1920 – 2005

STAND deeply regrets the passing of William Klingensmith, a friend and invaluable member of the Board of Directors until 2003. His perceptive observations, humor, and generous spirit were a source of support to all with whom he worked. His interest in and care for the world and his home region, and his active work for what he believed in, are an inspiration still. We will miss him.

Pantex Well Discussion

At the December Quarterly Groundwater meeting, BWXT-Pantex addressed questions raised in previous meetings. Two of the Ogallala wells of concern were OW-WR-40 and PTX06-1016 that had not been sampled in years.

According to BWXT:

Well # OW-WR-40, located near Playa One

- Was drilled 683 ft deep in October 1985 and sampled 107 times (1988 to 1998).
- Was no longer sampled because it has only a 2-inch well and was constructed of galvanized piping, which is deteriorating.
- Found only two contaminants – Thallium (0.1, 0.3, 0.2, and 0.1 mg/L in 1993-1994) and Mercury (0.2 ug/L in 1997).
- Re-sampled, but contaminants not detected.

However, BWXT did not:

- Explain why this well was not sampled between 1985 and 1988
- Mention other Contaminants that were detected in the last reported sample, collected in October 1998, in ug/L (ppb):

Hexavalent Chromium	10 1, 2.3
Trichlorobenzene	1.2
1,2,4-Trichlorobenzene	0.85 *

1,2-Dibromo-3-Chloropropane	3.2
Hexachlorobutadiene	0.66 *
Methyl Isobutyl Ketone	4.6 *
Naphthalene	3.9

(* Contaminant present but concentration is estimated)

According to BWXT:

Well # PTX06-1016, located in Zone 12

- Was drilled 528 ft deep in August 1995 and sampled 69 times (1995 to 2000).
- Had only one Contaminant detected in May 1999 – Nitrotoluene (0.2 ppb)
- Was last sampled in February 2000 and no contaminants were detected.
- Was no longer sampled because the water level dropped below the screen interval (August 2001), preventing sampling.

BWXT did not explain:

- Why Contaminants (May 1999) reported on the Pantex website included:

2-Nitrotoluene	0.24 ppb
Dibromofluoro-methane	44.00 ppb
- why only High Explosives were analyzed in the re-sampling on February 2000.

By Pam Allison

You are invited to join STAND and/or Donate to defer costs! Fill in and return this form to the STAND office, address on back.

Name _____

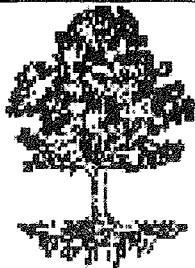
Address _____ City _____

State and Zip _____ Phone _____

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I have enclosed my contribution to STAND for: \$ _____ Annual Membership Dues (\$20/ person or \$10/student, part-time worker, or senior) \$ _____ Additional Tax Deductable Contribution for STAND work I would like to serve on the following committees:

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Technical Assistance Grants from the EPA make it possible for STAND to hire scientists to review DOE/Pantex reports. **For copies** of their reviews or TCEQ memoranda, contact STAND office .

Quarterly Groundwater Meeting—March 7, 2005
Panhandle Square House Museum—4PM (Copy of Agenda Available)
(Tentatively Next Meeting June 7th)

Earth Day is April 22, 2005. Watch for Conservation Consciousness Contest

5th Annual Statewide Water Conference, March 4th, 2005. Austin (Ph# 512-691-3435)

Recycling tip of the quarter!

BFI will furnish a container for office paper and pick it up from your business.
They will shred confidential papers and furnish a certificate.

Recycling info can be found at amarillorecycles.com

Stand is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit grassroots group dedicated to citizen responsibility for the care of our natural resources, to government that is accountable to the community, and to a forum for public debate in which solutions might be found... for our communities.